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ABSTRACT

While this study is geographically specific, it features an evaluation form which could be used elsewhere. The purpose of the investigation was twofold: (1) to determine if students who were in attendance at Bronx Community College during both the 1975-76 and the 1976-77 academic years perceive any significant changes, from the first to the second year, in the quality of student services they received; and (2) to determine if the ratings of student services obtained from these students vary significantly from those obtained from students who attended the college during only the 1976-77 academic year. Subjects were 736 students. The "Student Evaluation of Student Services Questionnaire," devised by the investigator, was utilized. Results indicate that students in attendance during both the 1975-76 and the 1976-77 academic years received "satisfactory" services both years. Students attending only in 1976-77 were significantly more satisfied than the first group. It is concluded that despite budgetary and personnel reductions during the past few years, quality student services, at a satisfactory or higher level, have been maintained. (Author/JLL)

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Student Evaluations of Student Services

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation was twofold:

(1) To determine if students who were in attendance at Bronx Community College during both the 1975-76 and the 1976-77 academic years perceive any significant changes, from the first to the second year, in the quality of the student services they received,

(2) To determine if the ratings of student services obtained from the students, described above, vary significantly from those obtained from students who attended the College during only the 1976-77 academic year.

Student Evaluations of Student Services

In the mid-1960's, the City University of New York (CUNY) established two major programs for educationally disadvantaged students, SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge) and College Discovery. These programs offer supportive services, such as counseling, remedial instruction, and financial aid, to participating students. SEEK, funded by New York State and New York City, is based in the senior colleges. College Discovery, funded by New York City, is based in the community colleges.

In 1970, CUNY established its Open Admissions program which guarantees every New York City resident who earns a high school diploma a place in one of its community or senior colleges.

Student personnel services, in general, and counseling services, in particular, have been an integral and important part of CUNY's special programs for educationally disadvantaged students. Consequently, in its 1972 Master Plan the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, while noting that two years is too short a period for a meaningful judgment of the totality of the Open Admissions program, pointed out that most of the colleges within CUNY made serious efforts to recruit experienced counselors to assist students in their initial adjustment to college life (pp. 64 and 68).

In summary, the Board stated:

> Basically, the first two years clearly demonstrated the value of counseling if properly administered, especially on a continuing basis. It must be expanded both in quantity

and direction and coordinated with remediation and regular academic instruction. Counselors should be provided with additional training and with opportunities to apply the most beneficial techniques (p. 65).

Recognizing the need to expand both the size and scope of CUNY's student personnel services as the institution began to extend the range and breadth of its programs in new areas and for new groups of students, the Council of Deans of Students undertook the difficult task of establishing the ratios of professional student personnel positions to students required to provide adequate services. The Council recommended the following as part of the 1968 Master Plan for CUNY:

1. The minimum ratio is one full-time professional person engaged in student personnel services for each two hundred students.
2. Special programs, such as special remediation programs, College Discovery, and SEEK, require a ratio of one counselor to each fifty students.
3. Services for part-time students are required on the same basis as for full-time students. The number of students, not the number of credit hours for which they are registered, determines the quantitative need, and, in fact, service to evening students is likely to impose greater requirements on the professional staff than services to an equivalent number of full-time day students (p. 123).

While the ratios, cited above, have never been fully implemented, the number of professional student personnel positions within CUNY increased dramatically during the early 1970's. At Bronx Community College, for example, the ratio of professional student personnel positions to students was one to 200 during the first year of the Open Admissions program. Due to increasing budgetary limitations, the ratio gradually changed. By the 1975-76 academic year, the ratio was one to 230.

In the Spring of 1975, the City of New York began to experience severe fiscal difficulties. The City's problems began to take their toll within CUNY during the 1975-76 academic year. CUNY's operating budget was cut, by the City, to such an extent that it was forced to close its doors for two weeks during the Spring of 1976 and to end its long standing tradition of free tuition for undergraduate matriculants who are residents of New York City.

During the Summer of 1976, thousands of faculty members, University-wide, were retrenched. At Bronx Community College, so many student personnel positions were eliminated that the ratio of student personnel positions to students changed from one to 230 to one to 303 for the 1976-77 academic year. There was widespread concern within the College, in general, and the Department of Student Development, in particular, that the quality of student services might not be maintained at a satisfactory level during the 1976-77 academic year.

The purpose of this investigation was twofold:

(1) To determine if students who were in attendance at Bronx Community College during both the 1975-76 and the 1976-77 academic years perceive

any significant changes, from the first to the second year, in the quality of the student services they received,

(2) To determine if the ratings of student services obtained from the students, described above, vary significantly from those obtained from students who attended the College during only the 1976-77 academic year.

Method

The Student Evaluation of Student Services Questionnaire which was devised by the investigator and others specifically for use in this investigation was administered to 736 students during the Spring, 1977 semester. Part of the questionnaire is presented below.

> Using the scale below, put the number in the box which corresponds to your impression of how well, or to what extent administrators, counselors, and teachers, in general, have helped you. Please remember to answer the question for both this year and last year. If you did not attend BCC last year, please answer the questions for this academic year.
>
> | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | 0 | Does not apply | 3 | Satisfactory |
> | 1 | Very unsatisfactory | 4 | Good |
> | 2 | Unsatisfactory | 5 | Excellent |
>
> How well, or to what extent have either administrators, counselors, or teachers helped you:

	Last Year ('75-'76)	This Year ('76-'77)
1. Cope with <u>academic</u> problems, for example, to better understand the college's grading system and academic regulations	A. ☐	B. ☐
2. Understand yourself better and cope with <u>personal</u> problems	A. ☐	B. ☐
3. Cope with <u>financial</u> problems	A. ☐	B. ☐
4. Use appropriate community agencies, when necessary	A. ☐	B. ☐
5. Explore career opportunities in relation to your interests, abilities, and academic program	A. ☐	B. ☐
6. Explore college transfer opportunities or college withdrawal, when necessary	A. ☐	B. ☐
7. Plan academic programs consistent with your degree requirements	A. ☐	B. ☐
8. Using the same scale as above, place in the box the number corresponding to your impression of how well the services, described above (questions 1 - 7), were presented in your Freshman Orientation class (SPD-99).	☐	

9. How would you evaluate the services and programs at the Student Center? A. ☐ B. ☐

10. How would you evaluate the performance of our student government? A. ☐ B. ☐

11. How well do existing student clubs and organizations satisfy student interests? A. ☐ B. ☐

12. How would you evaluate the cultural events offered at BCC? A. ☐ B. ☐

13. How well do the existing athletic programs satisfy the athletic interests of students? A. ☐ B. ☐

14. How would you evaluate the response of the Health Services Office to emergency medical needs? A. ☐ B. ☐

15. How effective is the College in providing information on health-related matters? A. ☐ B. ☐

16. Using the scale above, place in the box the number corresponding to your overall evaluation of student services offered at BCC. ☐

Students completed the questionnaire while attending classes offered by the Communications Arts and Sciences Department. Distributing the questionnaire through the Communications Department made it possible to obtain a representative sample since all students at the College must take at least one course within the Department. For example, there is no significant difference at the .01 level of significance between the percentages of male and female students among the subjects in this investigation and the percentages of male and female students within the general student body. Furthermore, large numbers of both first and second year students take coursework within the Department each semester. This fact made it possible to obtain a sufficient number of subjects who attended the College during both the 1975-76 and 1976-77 academic years.

The students and their responses to the individual items of the questionnaire were divided into three categories or groups. Group I was composed of students who attended the College during both the 1975-76 and the 1976-77 academic years. As members of this group, they rated the student services which the College offered during the 1975-76 academic year. Group II consisted of the same students. However, when placed in this group, they rated the student services offered by the College during the 1976-77 academic year. Group III was composed of students who attended the College during only the 1976-77 academic year. They, of course, only rated the student services offered by the College during the 1976-77 academic year.

Within each of the three groups, the mean score and standard deviation for each item of the questionnaire were computed. The results are

presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3. In addition, in order to test the significance of the difference between the mean scores obtained by (a) Groups I and II and (b) Groups II and III, t-tests were performed.

Results

With the exception of item 10, students who were in attendance at the College during both the 1975-76 and the 1976-77 academic years gave each student service, for both years, a mean rating which falls within the "satisfactory" range of scores, 2.5 - 3.5. Furthermore, there are no significant differences in their mean ratings for the two years at the .01 level of significance. Therefore, it may be concluded that these students remained satisfied, from one year to the next, with the student services they received.

Students who attended the College during only the 1976-77 academic year gave each student service, with the exception of items 8 and 13, a mean rating which falls within the "satisfactory" range of scores, 2.5 - 3.5. Their mean ratings for items 8 and 13 fall within the "good" range of scores, 3.5 - 4.5. Therefore, it may be concluded that this group of students is even more satisfied than the first group with the services received. As added evidence of this fact, it should be noted that the mean ratings obtained from this group of students for items 11, 13 and 16 are significantly greater at the .05 level of significance than those obtained from the first group of students. In addition, the mean ratings obtained from this group of students for items 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were significantly greater at the .01 level of significance than those

TABLE 1

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations:
Group I

Item	Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1	401	2.90	1.04
2	333	2.97	1.03
3	368	3.06	1.11
4	280	2.76	1.03
5	366	2.94	1.07
6	312	2.90	1.06
7	386	2.97	1.06
8	304	3.32	1.09
9	370	2.65	1.05
10	342	2.47	1.00
11	312	2.86	0.99
12	364	3.13	1.05
13	310	3.28	1.05
14	266	3.18	1.09
15	327	3.11	1.05
16	366	2.99	0.91

TABLE 2

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations:
Group II

Item	Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1	414	2.91	1.02
2	351	3.04	1.12
3	393	3.09	1.12
4	299	2.83	1.06
5	390	2.94	1.10
6	344	2.86	1.09
7	402	3.02	1.08
8	304	3.32	1.09
9	389	2.68	1.10
10	357	2.49	1.00
11	336	2.90	0.99
12	382	3.15	1.07
13	337	3.33	1.01
14	286	3.24	1.05
15	351	3.17	1.06
16	363	2.99	0.92

TABLE 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations:
Group III

Item	Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1	250	3.27	0.78
2	197	3.14	0.99
3	221	3.13	1.08
4	147	2.99	0.95
5	226	3.21	1.04
6	186	3.19	1.02
7	246	3.34	1.08
8	193	3.69	1.07
9	233	2.91	0.97
10	199	2.73	0.85
11	211	3.10	1.00
12	224	3.29	1.00
13	193	3.53	0.94
14	151	3.36	0.97
15	179	3.25	1.04
16	196	3.15	0.91

obtained from the first group of students. In summary, 10 of the 16 mean ratings obtained from students who attended the College during only the 1976-77 academic year were significantly greater than the ratings obtained from students who attended the College during both the 1975-76 and the 1976-77 academic years.

Discussion

On the basis of the results presented above, it may be concluded that in spite of drastic budgetary and personnel reductions during the past few years, the College, in general, and the Department of Student Development, in particular, have been able to maintain the quality of specific student services at a satisfactory or higher level.

In response to severe personnel reductions, the Department of Student Development decided to concentrate most of its energies in meeting the needs of first year students. Obviously, this policy has paid-off since first year students gave significantly higher ratings to many of the services offered by the Department than did upperclassmen. In fact, their overall evaluation of the services received, item 16, was significantly greater than that obtained from upperclassmen.

The quality of student services for upperclassmen has been maintained by the establishment of new programs by the Department of Student Development in cooperation with the College's teaching departments. A prime example is the newly established academic advisement program which involves the use of teaching faculty members in the academic advisement of upperclassmen. Their efforts are coordinated and supervised by the Department of Student Development.

While this investigation was intended as an evaluation of student services College-wide, it is, primarily, an evaluation of the Department of Student Development since the Department bears the primary responsibility for providing effective student services. Furthermore, it was especially important to determine whether or not the Department's effectiveness, during the 1976-77 academic year, had been eroded by the financial crisis within the City University of New York. Apparently, it was not.

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